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Original scientific paper

UDC: 37.036

DOI: 10.17810/2015.80

KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTIFICATION OF DIFFERENT ARTISTIC PRACTICES

Abstract: With its ambient, interesting and dynamic use of materials, alternative views of materials and objects, with its playfulness and affecting different senses contemporary fine art can be very interesting for art-educational work. Due to its complexity, however, it suffers from misunderstanding, retreat, and last but not least also fears both among teachers and learners. With the present article we wish to present a broader view of basic school pupils of fine art both historically and temporarily. We wished to determine what views students have of contemporary artistic practices and to what extent they know fine art. The results obtained with guided interviews and worksheets indicate that students are not well informed about contemporary and historical artistic practices. They nevertheless demonstrate great openness, curiosity and relaxation, willingness to get to know these practices deeper under proper guidance of the teacher and also to become enthusiastic about them.

Key words: contemporary artistic practices, fine art, teaching art, basic school.

Introduction

Through new findings from the point of view of fine art the child develops competences for life (Robinson, 2006; Kroflic, 2010). It is therefore important teachers are aware in art classes learners are not just instructed, but brought up through art, formed, and taught how to become human, how to understand the environment in which we all live, and how to get integrated into the society (Kroflic, 2010). Through fine art we learn the language of art, which is rich in emotional and also spiritual content. The awareness is therefore vital that through such a process learners are permanently expressing themselves and developing the ability of accepting and perceiving works of art (Duh, 2015). Experiencing and understanding a work of art is the process in which two types of knowledge are combined, experiential and theoretical (Lachapelle, Murray, & Neim, 2003). For this reason the role of school is extremely important in this context, as it trains the young human to be able to acquire the world and the environment in which he lives. Close to that it is very important to also accept and understand the cultural field, although at times it is inappropriate or even controversial. However, says Zupancic (2011), “controversial” works are an important component of contemporary art as well, and through it of contemporary society. He agrees with Efland (1990) and Hardy (2006), that such contemporary fine art exactly is an essential component of contemporary teaching

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of fine art in schools. We see the role of teacher in art-educational practice as being able with her or his approach to eliminate the gaps in the understanding of modern times in contemporary artistic practices. "Teachers, precisely, are the ones who in schools are able also with the assistance of special exercises, creative tasks, and didactic approaches to purposefully develop artistic creativity and creative thinking of students" (Herzog, 2009: 20). This is why we see art teachers have a great responsibility, as they (alone) are the ones who can introduce learners into the world of understanding contemporary fine art. We must, however, act cautiously, introduce the contents of contemporary fine art gradually and systematically and under the condition that we know the pupils very well. We must guide them from established ways of practicing art via modernistic approaches to contemporary artistic practices explaining the key moments and concepts to them. Positive results of this kind of approach can be found in research, which shows that learners who get encountered and acquainted with contemporary art and who get to know it have positive experience with it (Vrlic & Cagran, 2003; Zupancic, 2006; Arriaga & Aguirre, 2013). We find important the awareness of the "broader background of the emergence of a work of art, of the interlacement of the work of art with the environment, the presentation of relations between the work of art and life, connection with conceptual contents; which we find especially sensible in the presentation of conceptual artistic practices that represent the main orientation of contemporary fine art" (Vrlic, 2002: 7). Authors (Vrlic & Cagran, 2003; Zupancic, 2006; 2011; Bracun Sova & Kemperl, 2012; Kemperl, 2013a; 2013b) have been warning about a lack of contents of contemporary fine arts in the teaching of art in Slovenian educational space for several years. It is important students understand the interpretation of a contemporary work of art, which consists of integrating analysis and evaluation of the work of art (Arriga & Aguirre, 2013). In the response of learners, in which definite abilities of forming one's own opinion are developed, co-created, and shaped through reflection, interrogation and integration with the environment is extremely important (Charman, Rose & Wilson, 2006). Without explanation it is difficult or even impossible to understand the interpretation, this is why it is often subject to bad or even rejecting first impressions. These first impressions, exactly, are vital for further experiencing the artwork, regardless of what kind they are (Strnad, 2009). Appropriate level of experience and internalisation of the work of art is a good foundation for upgrading – the reaction. The latter can be verbal, descriptive, or artistic (Duh, 2015). For spectators getting to know, studying, experiencing and evaluating art works is important as in this way it is easier for them through their own experience to understand the functioning of artists and of art (Callaway & Kear, 2000).

Research problem and objectives

We were interested in what view eighth grade pupils of basic school have of contemporary art practices and to what extent they know fine art.

Methodology

Research method

The qualitative method of educational research was applied, namely the causal non-experimental method. To obtain data, semi-structured guided interview and worksheets were applied.

Research sample

Eighth grade pupils of Malečnik Basic School participated in the research. In the class there were 15 (100 %) pupils, of these 7 (47 %) boys and 8 (53 %) girls.

Research questions

In the research we wished to determine what attitude the pupils have toward contemporary fine art, how the pupils understand the communication of artworks and how they connect them with everyday life. The research questions we asked are:

- What attitude do the pupils have toward contemporary art? (RQ1)
- How do the pupils understand the content and the communication of artworks or how they connect the latter with everyday life? (RQ2)
- What interest and desire is there to get to know diverse artistic practices? (RQ3)

Data gathering procedure

A non-structured interview was carried out and recorded (audio taped) with the pupils. The data and information were transcribed and ranked.

Results and interpretation

Analysis of the views of contemporary fine art

The results are presented in the way to unite the answers and thoughts of the pupils of all the three participating groups (A, B, and C) as it turned out a lot of statements were very similar to each other. Some of the statements were different, which was promptly recorded.

Table 1: Ranking order of the categories of answers of all participating groups linked to the question about the attitude of pupils toward art and fine art.

Category	
Rank	The meaning of art and of fine art
1	Expressing thoughts, emotions, feeling through art
2	To paint, create, sculpture something
3	We encounter it in everyday life, it is connected with everything
	Man's choice for art
1	This is the way to express thoughts and emotions
2	They like doing this, it makes them happy, they are good at it
3	They want to attract attention
	The purpose of art – who it is intended for
1	For all people
2	For those who like it
3	The artist does this for himself

The meaning of art and of fine art

To the question what art means to them and what fine art is (Table 1) the pupils of all the three groups answered the most frequently that art means expression of artist's thoughts, emotions, and feelings. The answers of pupils followed who connected art with creation (painting, sculpturing) and finally of the students who linked art with everyday life (architecture, design). As mentioned above, the non-structured interview with the pupils was carried out in a relaxed conversation, where also any sub-questions were asked. At the mentioned question we also wished to know what pupils connect art to. In addition to museums and galleries the pupils also connected art to books, the street, school classes, the Internet, magazines, literature, dance, music, theatre (*"the things that are set at the stage, singing, dance, play"*).

Man' choice for art

Thinking why one chooses to engage in art (Table 1) the pupils stated the most frequently this is the way the artist expresses his thoughts and emotions. We additionally underline this category with pupils' statements: *"If someone is silent, they can express themselves, tell their life story through art"*, *"for others to see what he thinks"*. The answers follow that the artist enjoys being creative: *"because he likes art"*, *"because they like what they are doing"*, *"because everyone is good at an area"*. The last in rank were the answers of the pupils who thought the artist wants to attract attention: *"because he wants to be famous, visible, wants to show off"*, *"he wants to attract the attention of other people and invent something new, so others can see what he is capable of"*.

The purpose of art - who it is intended for

Most pupils agreed an artwork is intended for all people (Table 1). Although in the interpretation the answers of all groups were united we nevertheless find it important to highlight the answers of group 7A, as they differed the most from the answers of other two groups reflecting an important factor namely the lack of knowledge of the problem in comparison to the other two groups. Let us just mention a few of these statements: *"to those who find it interesting to look at a work of art"*, *"Some people buy themselves a work of art and expose it in the flat because it reminds them of something"*, *"You can get new ideas"*, *"You get to know sights and explore otherness in the world"*. The responses of the pupils followed who thought art is only intended for those who like it. The last in the rank of frequency are the responses of the pupils who thought the artist only creates artworks for himself. This category of responses is underlined with the following statements of pupils: *"The artist works for himself and for people"*, *"For himself to express his emotions and for people to see what he thinks"*, *"Even if it has no onlookers, the work can be successful"*.

To conclude, we can see the given answers (Table 1) reflect the expected view of the pupils on the discuss topic, as it was the first time they were faced with this kind of questions. This is the reason why the answers were sincere in their spontaneity, which we also could witness in the pleasant discussion at the end of the set of questions.

Table 2: Ranking order of the categories of answers connected with the question about fine art at school

Category	
Rank	Why do we meet fine art in school
1	Because it is general education
2	If someone wants to study fine art so they can learn something before
3	So we can express our thoughts and be relaxed
	Links to other subjects
1	Mathematics
2	History
3	Natural sciences
	What do you like doing the best in art classes
1	Drawing
2	Shaping in clay
3	Graphics

Why do we meet fine art in school

The most frequent answer of pupils to the question why we meet fine art in school (Table 2) was it is about general education. Let us underline this with *“If someone goes to a museum to know how much effort was invested in this, why, what the artist thought”, “So we can value a work of art, a culture”, “To be able to identify pictures”, “So we are better generally knowledgeable”, “So we can distinguish between a drawing and a picture”, “Because we meet it in everyday life”*. As the second in rank of the most frequent responses the fact was selected by the pupils that if someone wants to continue schooling they already learn something at school, underlined with *“If someone wants to become a painter”, “So we can go to painting school”, “If someone among us is talented in the area of art, to be able to further develop the talent”*. To the last place in rank the answers of the pupils have been put who stated with fine art emotions are expressed – underlined with *“To relax our thoughts, what we have in mind, if we drew a product to tell what he thinks”*.

Links to other subjects

At the question whether fine art can be connected with other school / learning subjects, initially the pupils were reserved. After some consideration they exposed (Table 2) mathematics the most frequently *“Links to drawing shapes and lines, symmetry, graphical representation, Leonardo da Vinci assisted himself with the knowledge of mathematics”*. The answers follow that referred to history *“Egyptian pyramids, they drew and painted in history already, because also artists learn something, they created in history already”* and natural sciences as the last in rank *“Drawing cells, animals”*. In addition to the mentioned ranks and categories we find it interesting to highlight the responses of the pupils who stated the technique *“Drawing, precision, skill, blueprints of buildings, sketches of statues”* and Slovenian *“Illustration, pictures”*. The pupils of group C thought further: *“Probably art has this connection with ethics, because there everyone has their opinion, every opinion is correct, also here every drawing has something in a way, you can think freely”*. At enumerating a student concluded: *“You could find a connection with almost any subject, even with geography or sport”*.

What do you like doing the best in art classes

The pupils of all the three groups exposed drawing the most frequently as what they like doing the best in art classes (Table 2). The answers followed that related to shaping in clay and as the last in rank were the responses that covered the area of graphics.

In art classes artistic material is a strong motivational element. In the first part the provided responses are not really surprising. Only at the statement of a girl pupil in group C *“When we are drawing (creating) our themes, motifs“* the pupils began thinking more broadly. At this the pupils were also prompted with the sub-question whether in artistic creation only artistic material is what really matters. Then some pupils answered it is not: *“My ideas arise from inspiration“, “From everyday life“, “The idea is what matters“, “The technique or the way how we are going to approach the work“, “Skill and training“, “Imagination is important“.*

In the interview we wished to obtain the opinions of pupils about contemporary art and mainly about the knowledge of this area. Below the set of categories of responses to the questions relating to contemporary art is presented.

Table 3: Ranking order of categories of some answers relating to questions about contemporary art.

Category	
Rank	Description of the concept of contemporary art
1	Something new, something that is topical at the time, modern
2	Unusual, different things
3	Everything can be art
Where can we meet contemporary art	
1	In museums and galleries
2	In the street
3	On the Internet
What is the difference between contemporary and historical art	
1	Artists help themselves with computers
2	They use different, more interesting materials
3	They do more interesting, crazy things

Description of the concept of contemporary art

At the concept of contemporary art the responses of the pupils are highlighted who stated the most frequently (Table 3) that it is something new, something that is topical at the time, and modern. The answers of the group of pupils follow who think contemporary art is unusual and different. At the third place of frequency the responses are found that today contemporary art can be anything. At the end we have to highlight the curiosity that the pupils of group A did not know the concept *“contemporariness“*, they did not know how to place it temporally in fine art.

Where can we meet contemporary art

The pupils stated the most frequently (Table 3) in galleries and museums and then that contemporary artists expose in the street. To underline: *“Because today this is modern“*,

“Because this did not exist before”, “So everyone can see it”. Surprisingly, a group of pupils ranked the Internet as the last, relating it to recent technological achievements.

What is the difference between contemporary and historical art

At the question how contemporary art differs from historical art, the pupils most frequently stated work with computer. The pupils follow who highlighted different, more interesting materials *“Artworks are more interesting because artists use imagination much more and they make crazy things”*. As examples of different materials the pupils reported *“Waste things”, “Earlier they didn’t know graffiti”*. The last group of pupils thought artists have different, more original ideas *“Artist think more broadly, there is no one who is right, everything is right”* (Table 3). In spite of everything said, contemporary artistic materials with which contemporary artists create were unknown to the pupils. They named materials with which they had artistic experience at school (siporex, metal, arranger sponge, paper rolls, waste material).

From the obtained results of the analysis of the interview we can conclude at the topic of contemporary art pupils express reserved positions and opinions, which reflects their lack of knowledge and uncertainty in discussions about unknown topics, contemporary art. We can recognise curiosity, inquisitiveness, and interest, however, to become more deeply acquainted with the topic. Also some statements of pupils prove this such as *“We wish to be better acquainted with contemporary artists”* and *“We are more interested in contemporary art than in old artists”*.

With the presented results of the first part of the research we can answer the set research questions. What attitude do the pupils have toward contemporary art? (RQ₁) and What interest and desire is there to get to know diverse artistic practices? (RQ₃)

Analysis of the knowledge of selected examples of fine art

With the assistance of the worksheet we wished to obtain information from the pupils how they understand the content and the message of artworks or how they relate the latter with everyday life (RQ₂). The worksheet comprised six works of art from various historical periods. In the selection we followed the criterion that all the presented works of art have been confirmed by the art historical profession.

Table 4: Ranking order of the categories of answers regarding the visibility of the content of the first example (Michelangelo: David, 1501-1504).

Visibility of content							
		Rank	Category	A	B	C	f
		1	Statue of a nude man, human body	18	2	3	23
		2	David	0	10	8	18
		3	Statue	5	3	2	10
		4	Other	2	0	2	4
Total number of pupils		25	15	15	55		

Looking at the results (Table 4) we see that a majority of the pupils of group A interpreted the picture in the way it is a statue of a nude man. There were fewer pupils who stated merely it was a statue. The statement of a pupil was interesting that it was a man from Olympic games or an important person. More than half of the pupils of groups B and C stated it was the statue of David, while others merely wrote it was a statue, just a few mentioned nudity. Two pupils stated the author was Michelangelo, of these one pupil defined more precisely it was about a statue produced in the Renaissance and that emphasis is on the structure of the body. Based on the above we can conclude that the presented work of art is better known to pupils of higher grades, which was also expected.

Table 5: Ranking order of the categories of answers regarding the understanding and interpretation of the message of the first example (Michelangelo: David, 1501-1504).

Understanding and interpretation of the message		Rank	Category	A	B	C	f
		1	Appearance, the structure of the nude body, the image of a human, the shape of the human	11	6	5	22
		2	Pride, sign of power, hero	2	2	5	9
		3	That we should not be ashamed of the nude body, that naked we are beautiful	5	2	1	8
		4	Other	7	5	4	16
		Total number of pupils		25	15	15	55

Looking at the frequency distribution of the responses of all the three groups (Table 5) we can notice that in all the three groups the interpretation prevails in the way that the statue provides information on what a nude human body looks like. Some pupils stated that people are also beautiful without clothes and that we need not be ashamed of our body. Also interesting is the interpretation of a pupil that the work communicates “some kind of struggle against the idea that homoerotic people should not socialise”. Only a few pupils of groups B and C stated we need not be ashamed of our body. A majority of the pupils understood the message of the work as a presentation of the exterior, the structure and the shape of the human body in the sense of research as well as that it conveys pride, sign of power, and a hero who will save us. The pupil thought more deeply who stated the work draws our attention to “what we people are like and how we sometimes get absorbed in thought”, while another pupil recognised the message of “loyalty” in the statue.

Table 6: Ranking order of the categories of answers regarding the visibility of the content of the second example (Rembrandt van Rijn, *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, 1632).

						
Visibility of content	Rank	Category	A	B	C	f
	1	Exploring the human body	7	12	7	26
	2	Physician, surgeon, surgery	6	1	1	8
	3	Autopsy	0	0	4	4
	4	Sacrifice, worship	3	0	0	3
	5	Other	9	2	3	14
Total number of pupils			25	15	15	55

Looking at the responses of the pupils (Table 6) of all the three groups, we can see that in all the three groups the pupils the most frequently defined the content as a presentation of the human body. The pupils explained the content of the work to themselves in quite diverse ways. They stated a “male companionship” observing a surgery, “a generation”, “eight men with another man”, etc. In contrast to group A the pupils in groups B and C stated the most frequently it was about exploring the human body “to see what organs a human has”. In addition to surgery the pupils of group C mentioned autopsy several times and emphasised the man is dead. A majority mentioned autopsy for the purpose of researching the human body (organs), two pupils used the term “anatomy”. Similarly as in the previous work of art it proved also at this one that the pupils of higher grades know the content of the mentioned work of art better.

Table 7: Ranking order of the categories of answers regarding the understanding and interpretation of the message of the second example (Rembrandt van Rijn, The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp, 1632).

Understanding and interpretation of the message	Rank	Category	A	B	C	f
	1	Exploring, autopsy of the human body in the past	6	8	3	17
	2	Development, science, progress of medical science	5	6	6	17
	3	Funeral of a human, someone has died	5	0	3	8
	4	Other	9	1	3	9
Total number of pupils			25	15	15	55

The pupils linked the interpretation of the message (Table 7) closely to the content, as very similar responses appeared. In group A a number of very different interpretations appeared: “that surgery was done on live, “that in medical profession there are a lot of people” and “that in the past there was no such assistance as today”. The pupils of group B interpreted the painting through the content of exploring the human body, surgery and autopsy were mentioned, a lot of pupils stated that the reproduction shows the development of science. The largest number of pupils of group C stated it was about research purpose and that means progress of medical science. Also interesting is the interpretation of a pupil who stated it was about “tranquillity”, another pupil wrote it was about “sadness and bewilderment”, and a third one, again, it was about “public autopsies”. We can conclude from the results that the students linked the content of the presented reproduction strongly with the recognised motif.

Table 8: Ranking order of the categories of answers regarding the visibility of the content of the third example (Pablo Picasso, Girl before a Mirror, 1932).

						
Visibility of content	Rank	Category	A	B	C	f
	1	Two women (girls, friends)	13	3	6	22
	2	A pregnant woman, mother and baby, woman and child	5	5	7	17
	3	Love between two persons, friendship (between two women)	2	4	1	7
	4	Other	5	3	1	9
Total number of pupils			25	15	15	55

It can be seen from Table 8 that the most often the pupils of all the three groups recognised two women in the reproduction and understood them as friends. The second in rank are the

pupils who recognised a pregnant woman in the reproduction or a mother with baby. The fewest pupils stated love between two persons. The statement of a pupil is also interesting, that the painting represents “two faces composed of shapes”; two pupils mentioned “two multi-coloured humans who differ from each other”. Only one pupil from group B mentioned that the painting represents “a woman who is watching at herself in the mirror, at one side she is presented as she is, and on the other how she sees herself”.

Table 9: Ranking order of the categories of answers regarding the understanding and interpretation of the message of the third example (Pablo Picasso, Pablo Picasso, Girl before a Mirror, 1932).

Understanding and interpretation of the message	Rank	Category	A	B	C	f
	1	That we are not all the same, diversity, otherness	5	6	2	13
	2	Love	5	1	5	11
	3	Friendship, love among friends	5	1	3	8
	4	Motherly love	3	1	4	8
	5	Other	7	6	1	14
Total number of pupils			25	15	15	55

It can be read from the table (Table 9) that the answers of the pupils of the first group (A) are rather equally distributed according to categories. In group A the number of responses is the same in the first three ranks. In group B the pupils prevail who thought we are not all the same, diversity, otherness. In the last group (C) the pupils prevailed who interpreted the given reproduction with the concept of love. We quote some of the different interpretations recorded by pupils: “It communicates we must help each other”, “That in friendship religion, gender, race is not important ...”, “church windows once”, “art, how we can make an image”, “embrace” ... Some pupils mentioned “reflection in the mirror”.

Table 10: Ranking order of categories of answers regarding the visibility of the content of the fourth example (Richard Serra: Snake, 1994-1997).

Visibility of content	Rank	Category	A	B	C	f
	1	Ma43ze	7	2	3	12
	2	Forms, different shapes	6	1	4	11
	3	Museum, gallery, exposition	3	5	3	11
	4	Other	9	7	5	21
	Total number of pupils			25	15	15



Identification of the content presented quite a problem for pupils. As can be read from Table 10, a few similar responses appeared, otherwise the pupils recognised different motifs or contents. Beside the categorised responses the pupils wrote that the work represents “a road with obstacles”, “curved walls”, “the universe”, “the feeling of the human”, “a modern building”, “a skiing slope” and similar. The answer of the pupil is interesting who argued it was about “a picture exposed in a gallery”.

Table 11: Ranking order of categories of answers regarding understanding and interpretation of the fourth example (Richard Serra: Snake, 1994-1997).

Understanding and interpretation of the message	Rank	Categories	A	B	C	f
	1	Diversity of forms, materials	7	4	1	12
	2	To find the way to exit, way out – maze, road, way	8	0	0	8
	3	Curiosity, ingenuity, otherness	4	2	0	6
	4	Other	6	9	14	29

Ranking the answers at the fourth reproduction was difficult, because the responses of groups B and C of ranks two and three were in minority or not existing at all. We see, however, the most frequently the pupils stated diversity of forms, materials. The pupils of group A related the work the most frequently to some kind of way, exit, a maze. The pupils stated also the work communicates “how a space can be made more lively”, “how we feel in curving rooms”, “opera”, “forlornness”, “that some things are bigger than we, people”, “what a museum of modern art looks like”, “wavy life”, “how complicated human kind is”, “tranquillity”, “being absorbed in our thoughts”, “that the world is modern”, “creativity” ...

Table 12: Ranking order of answers regarding understanding and interpretation of the fourth example (Figure 4)

Recognising the material	Rank	Category	A	B	C	f
	1	Plastic	4	2	8	14
	2	Wood	8	4	2	14
	3	Metal (iron, aluminium, copper)	7	3	3	13
	4	Tempera - painting	2	3	1	6
	5	Other	4	2	1	7
Total number of pupils			25	15	15	55

Also recognising the material the pupils had diverse opinions (Table 12). The same number of pupils gave the answer plastic and wood. The answers follow metal and tempera. From the analysis of answers about this work of fine art we can conclude the pupils found the work strange, perhaps incomprehensible. At the same time it stimulated them to deeper thinking, as every pupil saw something entirely unique in the work.

Table 13: Ranking order of categories of answers regarding the visibility of content of the fifth example (Marcel Duchamp, Fountain, 1917)

							
Visibility of content	Rank	Category	A	B	C	f	
	1	Urinal, men's WC, toilet bowl	18	12	9	39	
	2	A potty, chamber pot	3	0	3	6	
	3	Other	4	3	3	10	
	Total number of pupils		25	15	15	55	

In Marcel Duchamp's artwork, Fountain, a majority of pupils recognised a urinal, because of its flipped form also a chamber pot (Table 13). Interesting statements are also "chair", "a seat in the form of a pear", "a fountain that could be fixed on a wall", which indicates some pupils already thought about why the artist presented a urinal as a work of art.

Table 14: Ranking order of categories of answers regarding understanding and interpretation of the message of the fifth example (Figure 5).

Understanding and interpretation	Rank	Category	A	B	C	f
	1	So we can go pee	9	5	3	17
	2	Otherness of a toilet, creativity, ingenuity, originality	6	3	5	14
	3	Other	10	7	7	24
	Total number of pupils		25	15	15	55

The pupils of groups A and B (Table 14) the most frequently interpreted the content of the given art reproduction as useful in purpose. The students of group C, however, the most frequently interpreted it with answers otherness of a toilet, creativity, ingenuity. There were many responses, which were categorized under other. Let us quote some interesting ones: "Drinkers can be of unusual shapes", "So we can wash our hands", "It represents a modern seat", "The artwork speaks about the novelty of materials", "That we people are all the same" etc.

Table 15: Ranking order of categories of answers regarding the recognition of the content of the sixth example (Christo & Janne Cloude, *Wrapped Reichstag*, Berlin, 1971 – 1995).

							
Visibility of content	Rank	Category	A	B	C	f	
	1	Castle, mansion, palace	16	7	12	33	
	2	Glacier, ice age building, ice kingdom	6	1	1	8	
	3	Other	3	7	4	16	
	Total number of pupils		25	15	15	55	

The pupils of groups A and C the most frequently recognised the content of the work of art (Figure 6) as a mansion, a palace, or a castle (Table 15). The pupils of group A also related the work with ice. There were, however, also some other answers. A pupil of group A stated the work represents “a tourist sight as a lot of people are looking at it”. In group B a pupils stated it was about “humankind after some time waiting what is going to happen”, some kind of presentation of future. Some pupils linked the work to rocks and stones, a pupil of group C wrote it was a “cathedral of stone, which cannot be entered”. Only one pupil (group C) described the motif more precisely, namely that “it is about a palace that is wrapped in or covered with cellophane or plastic representing human art”.

Table 16: Ranking order of categories of answers regarding understanding and interpretation of the message of the sixth example (Christo & Janne Cloude, *Wrapped Reichstag*, Berlin, 1971 – 1995).

Understanding and interpretation of message	Rank	Category	A	B	C	f
	1	Links with art, sight, idea, creativity	6	3	5	14
	2	Castle	3	3	3	9
	3	Message linked with ice, glacier	7	0	0	7
	4	Life in the past, castle, how people lived	2	1	1	4
	5	Other	7	8	6	21
Total number of pupils		25	15	15	55	

From the table it can be seen (Table 16) that the pupils of all the three groups wrote answers the most frequently that are linked to art and the creativity of the artist. The second in the rank of frequency are answers that represented a castle. The third in the rank of frequency are only the answers of the pupils of group A, who linked the answers with a message relating to ice, a glacier. The last in rank – besides the answers in the category other – are the answers related to life in the past.

Also at this work diverse interpretations appeared among which we highlight the most interesting ones: “the beauty of nature”, “that something magnificent can also be created of seemingly useless things”, “shield and protection against something”, “how much work needs to be invested into something to last”, “power”, “safety”...

Table 17: Ranking order of answers regarding the visibility of the content of the seventh case (Duane Hanson, Supermarket Lady, 1969).

						
Visibility of content	Rank	Category	A	B	C	f
	1	A woman who is buying (a buyer)	19	8	10	37
	2	An obese woman who eats too much, has too much of everything, too many sweets	2	4	2	8
	3	Other	4	3	3	10
	Total number of pupils		25	15	15	55

In the work (Table 17) a majority of the pupils recognised a woman who is buying. They defined extremely critically it was about an obese woman who has too much of everything. They mentioned under other: “my mum”, “a peasant woman”, “a woman who helps the poor”...

Table 18: Ranking order of answers regarding understanding and interpretation of the message of the seventh example (Duane Hanson, Supermarket Lady, 1969).

						
Understanding and interpretation of the message	Rank	Category	A	B	C	f
	1	Purchasing, buying	10	3	4	17
	2	Obesity, overweight	3	6	3	12
	3	That people buy too much, also things they do not need	3	3	4	10
	4	Women’s errand, that women like buying	3	2	3	8
	5	Other	6	1	1	8
Total number of pupils		25	15	15	55	

Pupils found that artwork tells something that is related to shopping (Table 18). Also in their interpretation of the message of the artwork the pupils criticized the woman “who is obese”; they stated that the work draws attention to the consequences of overweight. The third rank speaks of the excessive consumption of our society. With this, the pupils approached the correct interpretation of the work.

Conclusion

We can conclude at the topic of contemporary art pupils express reserved positions and opinions, which reflects their lack of knowledge and uncertainty in discussions about unknown topics, contemporary art. We can, however, recognise curiosity, inquisitiveness, and interest to be more deeply acquainted with the topic. Also some statements of pupils prove this, such as “We wish to be better acquainted with contemporary artists” or “We are more interested in contemporary art than in old artists”. Looking at the obtained results of the second part of the study we can say the pupils were better able to recognise the motifs of the presented artistic reproductions, when speaking about content, however, they were able to recognise it if they could relate it to their lives; this being an extremely relevant finding, which art teachers should take into account in their art educational practice. Learners internalise the content to be able through it to identify themselves, to relate with their own experience, knowledge, etc. It is therefore the task of every teacher to transmit the selected content to the pupil and to present it in a way understandable and known to the pupil. The pupils recognised the first three examples as works of art, while at the third example they thought loudly why an urinal was placed on the worksheet. The most different interpretations were written at the works of Richard Serra and of Crista & Janne Cloude. We can conclude it was the first time they saw the reproductions (photographs) of such works. A difference was also detected in the thinking of the students in group A compared to the pupils in group B and C. The pupils of group A more often derived from their own experience, their attitude to everyday life reflected in the recognition of content and in interpretation, also noticeable was the influence of the events at the time of solving the worksheets. The pupils of groups B and C recognised and interpreted the content more with reasoning and on the basis of previous knowledge about fine arts. After finishing the work, most of the students expressed their interest in finding out additional information about the artworks. The goal of teaching fine arts is not only that pupils develop motor skills and acquire artistic concepts, but also to develop a critical view of the environment in which they live. Especially because it is known that in the higher grades of basic school and in secondary school students’ desire for artistic creation decreases, it is extremely important that the teacher finds ways to motivate and make the students interested in artistic expression, which is not necessarily a classical drawing, a painting, or a statue.

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